



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

NEWS RELEASE

SNAKE RIVER FISH AND WILDLIFE OFFICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DRAFT RECOVERY PLAN FOR THREATENED SPALDING'S CATCHFLY PUBLISHED

Public encouraged to comment by May 15, 2006

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today released a draft recovery plan for Spalding's catchfly (*Silene spaldingii*), a rare plant found in four western states and Canada. Public comment will be accepted until close of business May 15, 2006.

The draft recovery plan calls for the development of habitat management plans for key conservation areas. These plans will address conservation measures for self-sustaining Spalding's catchfly populations, including invasive non-native plant control, plant surveys and monitoring, fire management, livestock grazing management, and pollinator protection. Activities such as herbicide spraying, seed banking, Population Viability Analysis, and agricultural/urban development are also addressed in the draft recovery plan.

"Our goal is to recover the species by protecting and maintaining reproducing, self-sustaining populations in the areas where it occurs," said Jeff Foss, Field Supervisor of the Service's Snake River Fish and Wildlife Office. "We are committed to working with others to begin the recovery of this rare plant so we urge people to review the draft plan and provide information that may further recovery efforts."

The objective of a recovery plan is to provide a framework for species recovery in its natural habitat so that protection under the Endangered Species Act is no longer necessary. The Act requires development and implementation of a recovery plan for all listed species unless such plans would not contribute to their conservation. Recovery plans describe tasks that, when accomplished, should ensure the species' survival and eventual removal from the federal List of Threatened and Endangered Species. Recovery plans are advisory and carry no regulatory authority.

Spalding's catchfly was listed as a threatened species in October, 2001. It is a member of the carnation or pink family, and is a long-lived perennial herb. The plant has small greenish-white flowers, lance-shaped leaves, and ranges from 8 to 24 inches in height. It is distinguished by its very sticky foliage and flower petals, hence the name "catchfly."

This species is native to portions of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia, Canada. Fifty-eight percent of Spalding's catchfly populations occur either entirely or partially on private land; the remaining populations occur on federal lands (U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Refuges, National Park Service, and Department of Defense) and state and Tribal lands.

Spalding's catchfly may be impacted by invasive nonnative plants, loss of habitat due to human development, and habitat degradation associated with domestic livestock and wildlife grazing. Other impacts may include changes in fire frequency and intensity, off-road vehicle use, and herbicide spraying and drift.

The Service encourages the public to participate in the recovery of this plant by commenting on the draft plan and becoming involved in the implementation of recovery efforts on private, state, federal, and tribal lands. Public comment may include scientific information about Spalding's catchfly, ideas about potential conservation actions for the plant, and possible impacts to the species on lands that are either privately owned or managed by state/federal agencies and the Tribes. Through partnerships with private landowners, state and federal agencies, Tribes, and nongovernmental organizations and associations, the Service hopes to develop a recovery strategy that results in the ultimate de-listing of the species.

If recovery conservation measures are successful, Spalding's catchfly may be de-listed by 2040. Because the plant is a long-lived perennial species, annual population data may vary significantly in response to climatic events. A minimum of 20 years, therefore, will be needed to determine long-term population trends. The estimated recovery date reflects the need for long-term monitoring, as well as the time it may take to supplement or establish new populations of the plant.

The total estimated cost for recovery of this species is \$8,543,000. The average yearly cost for the first five years is estimated to be \$343,400. Of the estimated total cost, roughly 25% of the funding will be directed toward surveys and monitoring. A final recovery plan for Spalding's catchfly is expected to be released in 2006.

A public review and comment period is established with the release of this draft recovery plan. Comments must be received by close of business May 15, 2006.

Comments may be submitted in writing to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Snake River Fish and Wildlife Office, 1387 S. Vinnell Way, Room 368, Boise, Idaho 83709. Comments may also be faxed to 208-378-5262, or e-mailed to fw1srbocomment@fws.gov. Please include "Spalding's Catchfly Comments" in the title line for faxes and e-mails, with the name and address of the person submitting comments included in the message. If our Internet connection is disrupted, please submit your comments by mail or fax to the contact office above.

The draft recovery plan may be viewed online at <http://idahoes.fws.gov>. Copies of the draft recovery plan are available for inspection, by appointment during normal business hours, at the following locations:

IDAHO

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Snake River Fish and Wildlife Office
1387 S. Vinnell Way, Room 368, Boise, Idaho 83709 (208-378-5243; fax 208-378-5262)

MONTANA

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Helena Fish and Wildlife Office
100 N. Park, Suite 320, Helena, Montana 59601 (406-449-5322; fax 406-449-5339)

OREGON

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, La Grande Fish and Wildlife Office
3502 Highway 30, La Grande, Oregon 97850 (541-962-8584; fax 541-962-8581)

WASHINGTON

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Upper Columbia Fish and Wildlife Office
11103 East Montgomery Dr, Suite 2, Spokane, Washington 99206 (509-665-3508; fax 665-3509)

For further information, please contact Susan Burch, 1387 S. Vinnell Way, Room 368, Boise, Idaho 83709, 208-378-5243, fax 208-378-5262.

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

For more information about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, visit our homepage at <http://www.fws.gov>